WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Out-break of bird-flu

2727. SHRI VIJAYKUMAR RUPANI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware about the out-breaks of H5N1 bird-flu in neighbouring Pakistan which is setting off alarm bells in India;

(b) whether Government have alerted our border States to be watchful;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether Government have taken any step to prevent the out-breaks of bird-flu;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) Yes Sir, Government has information about outbreak of Avian Infuluenza in Pakistan.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) In view of the reported outbreaks in Pakistan, the North-Western States bordering Pakistan were immediately alerted to intensify vigilance in the bordering areas especially to check informal/illegal trade of restricted livestock and livestock products; intensify animal disease surveillance especially of poultry and in areas visited by migratory birds; assess and activate preparedness to handle control operations in the event of any outbreak of the disease into the country; keep poultry indoors and prevent intermingling with other species etc. The border security forces and customs field formation have also been alerted. Information, Education, Communication (IEC) campaigns have been intensified in these areas.

(d) to (f) Precautionary steps have been taken in the country for preparedness to prevent, control and contain outbreaks of bird-flu in the country. The details are given in the Statement.

Statement

Precautionary steps taken in the country as part of preparedness and to prevent outbreaks of bird flu in India

Measures taken in the country as part of preparedness and to prevent bird flu outbreak in India are as follows:—

1. A clear and focused National Strategy for preparedness, control and containment has been formulated. The immediate priority is to minimize the public health risk by containing AI at source i.e. the animal by halting further spread of epidemic in poultry population. Based on the outbreak experience, a detailed Action Plan (first developed by the Department in 2005) has been revised and circulated to the States in November, 2006 to undertake control and containment operations.

2. Surveillance is continuing throughout the country. More than 1,25,000 samples have been tested after 18th February, 2006 (first outbreak of Avian Influenza in India).

3. A mechanism to provide immediate reporting of unusual mortality is continued to be operationalized by which such information is collected by GOI Liaison Officers from States. Weekly reports on disease situation are being hosted on the Departmental website.

4. Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) have been constituted at level of Government of India (Central RRTs) and State Governments (State RRTs) to combat outbreaks, if any.

5. The preparedness of the States is being continually assessed and monitored by the GOI through video-conferences, National Conferences of Animal Husbandry Secretaries, regular touring by GOI officers, weekly reports on unusually mortality from States etc.

6. Ready Reckoners have been developed by GOI for situation analysis of preparedness by States.

7. Joint mechanisms between key stakeholder Departments of GOI especially Animal Husbandry and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW) have been operationalised at various levels and are working successfully. The Committee of Secretaries (COS)

headed by the Cabinet Secretary periodically reviews the situation. The Inter-Ministerial Task Force is reviewing the situation regularly. The Joint Monitoring Group is meeting frequently to review and decide on technical matters.

8. Reserves of essential material for control operations have been developed and are being expanded further.

9. The Department is maintaining a strategic reserve of Avian Influenza vaccines for poultry, though vaccination has not yet been applied in the country.

10. The Department has trained more than 22,000 veterinary manpower to handle control and containment operations. States have been advised to utilize the master trainers so available to train other veterinary staff.

11. Testing of serum samples has been started at regional level in the laboratories at Bangalore, Kolkata, Pune and Jallandhar.

12. The Government has announced and demonstrated its policy to compensate poultry farmers for the poultry killed in operations.

13. High Security Animal Disease Laboratory (HSADL), Bhopal is stocked with required reagents.

14. A Project of Rs. 134.78 corores for preparedness, control and containment of AI has been approved which will obtain World Bank funding.

15. Information, Education, Communication (IEC) campaigns have been carried out jointly by MOHFW and this Department inprint and electronic media.

16. An exercise has been initiated in collaboration with UNICEF and Wetlands International to develop vulnerability mapping depicting areas under threat of AI for use as a planning tool.

17. A system has been put in place since 2004 to ban imports from countries reporting AI.

18. In view of the outbreak inthe neighboring countries, the following measures have been taken:—

    a. Ban on import of all livestock products related to poultry and

swine from the affected countries.

b. Border States of Pakistan, Myanmar and Bangladesh have been alerted.

c. States have been advised to increase surveillance, especially around water bodies, advise farmers to keep poultry indoors; prevent intermingling of poultry with other species; report unusual mortality immediately; intensify vigilance across border to prevent trade especially illegal in restricted items.

d. Border security forces and customs filed formations have been alerted.

e. Information, Education, Communication (IEC) campaign has been stepped up in bordering States.

Export of mangoes to America and Japan

2728. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the United States of America and Japan have given permission for the export of Indian mangoes into their market;

(b) if so, how many tones of mangoes are expected to be exported to these two countries during the current season;

(c) which varieties of mangoes, available in Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh would avail the opportunity of export;

(d) how much foreign exchange is estimated to be earned from the trade;

(e) whether steps have been initiated to create awareness on quality produce and also provide incentives to the farmers to boost the mango exports; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) It is expected that approximately 300-400 MTs of mangoes would